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Libyan Activities in West Africa

With the exception of Ghana (where Libya moved quickly to capitalize on the December 1981 military takeover), Libyan activities in West Africa have been at a low level compared with efforts elsewhere in Africa. In Ghana, the Libyans moved quickly after Flight Lt. J.J. Rawlings seized power -- an official Libyan delegation quickly arrived for a visit and consultations with the new government, and Libyan cargo planes have averaged about two a week since the coup d'etat. The new government almost immediately re-established diplomatic relations with Ghana and the Libyans opened a People's Bureau. The Libyan cargo planes are ostensibly bringing foodstuffs and medical supplies but may also be carrying military equipment.

In other West African countries, Libya appears to be engaged in a policy of subverting governments opposed to Libya, and encouraging and training dissidents from these countries. The other main ally in this regard is Benin where the Libyan People's Bureau numbers almost a 100 persons. Benin evidently serves as a transit and recruiting point for West African going to and returning from Libya for subversive training.

These subversive efforts on the part of Libya have been directed against Niger (where Libya has also encouraged rebellion by Tuareg nomads in Niger), against Senegal (where Libya has offered a

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haven and support to a leading oppositionist), Nigeria (where Libya has bribed government officials and supported northern political and religious groups), Mali (where Libya again is encouraging rebellion by ethnic minorities), and Mauritania (where Libyan political adventurism in support of pro-Libyans was so blatant, the military faction opposed to the pro-Libyans moved quickly to change the leadership.)

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